A NEW BUTTERFLY GENUS, SPECIES AND SUBSPECIES FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE, POLYOMMATINI)

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Abstract. *Solomona* gen. n. is erected for new polyommatine taxa from the Solomon Islands: *Solomona sutakiki* sp. n. (Guadalcanal) and *S. sutakiki malaitae* ssp. n. (Malaita).

INTRODUCTION

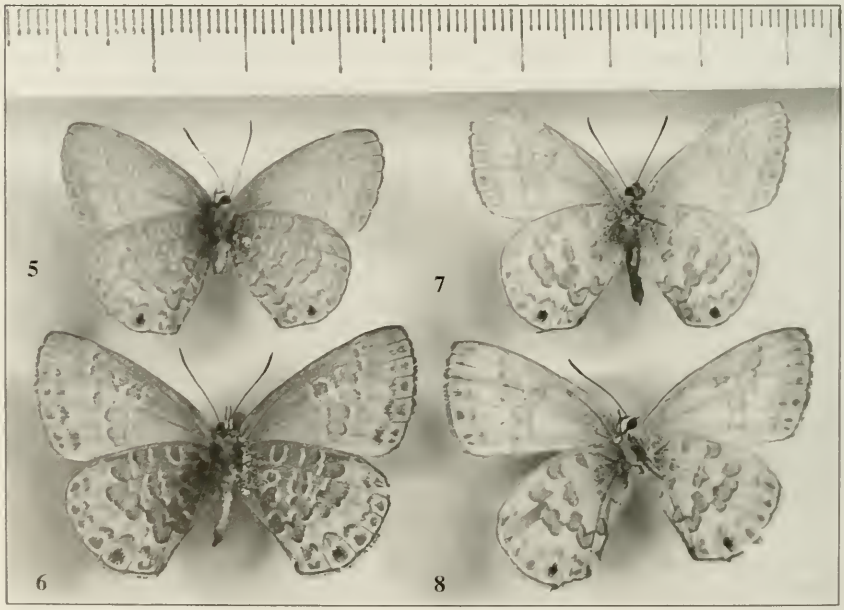
During field work for a study of Solomon Islands butterflies (Tennent, 1998), a series of undescribed polyommatine lycaenids, not conforming to any known genus, were collected on Guadalcanal island. Further specimens, originating from Malaita island, were subsequently discovered in the collections of Dodo Creek Research Station, Honiara, and The Natural History Museum, London (BMNH). Structure of the male genitalia suggest affinity with *Tartesa* Hirowatari 1992 (T. Hirowatari, pers. comm.; J. N. Eliot, pers. comm.), recently separated from *Nacaduba* Moore 1881, primarily on the basis of features of the female genitalia (Hirowatari, 1992: 23) for two Solomon Islands species: *T. astarte* Butler and *T. ugiensis* Druce. Despite considerable diversity found in the genus *Nacaduba*, the new butterflies have little obvious affinity with either *Nacaduba* or *Tartesa* in external appearance. The genitalia of the female, whilst clearly related to both, are significantly different from either and warrant erection of a new genus (Hirowatari, pers. comm.).

Solomona gen. n.

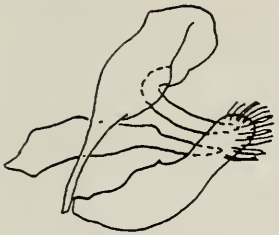
Description. Differs from *Nacaduba* and *Tartesa* in its relatively large size, wing markings and female genitalia. Wing venation as *Nacaduba*/*Tartesa*; hindwing tail short, 'stumpy' (longer, filamentous in *Nacaduba*); male genitalia similar to *Tartesa*; female genitalia superficially similar to *Nacaduba*/*Tartesa*; signa absent (bursa with pair of prominent horn-like signa in *Nacaduba*; absent in *Tartesa*); corpus bursae small, elongated, simple (larger, globular in *Nacaduba*; very large, prominently swollen dorsally in *Tartesa*); ductus seminalis uniformly slender, with point of attachment to bursa copulatrix approximately one-third of distance from ostium (swollen at point of attachment in *Nacaduba*; slender, point of attachment nearly at centre of dorsal surface of bursa copulatrix in *Tartesa*); ostium opens between 7th and 8th abdominal segment as in most other Polyommatini (middle of 8th segment in *Nacaduba* [but somewhat variable; J. N. Eliot, pers. comm.] and *Tartesa*). Type species: *Solomona sutakiki* sp. n.

Solomona sutakiki sp. n. (Figs 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10)

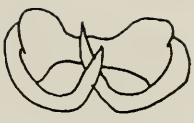
Description. Male forewing length 18 mm; upperside pale silvery-white; wing fringes brown; borders brown; veins heavily lined brown; hindwing upperside with prominent black marginal spot in space 2, very faintly bordered blue-green anteriorly; underside pale brown with typical lycaenid arrangements of pale lines, enclosing slightly darker irregular median and postmedian bands; marginal series of triangular brown markings enclosed in paler band; prominent black spot in space 2,



Figs 1, 2, 5, 6: *Solomona sutakiki sutakiki* 1, 5 ♂ (holotype); 2, 6, ♀ (paratype); 3, 4, 7, 8: *S. s. malaitae* 3, 7 ♂ (holotype); 4, 8, ♀ (paratype).



9a



9b

9c

9d

9e

10a

10b

Figs 9a–e: *S. s. sutakiki* (holotype), male genitalia; 9a, genitalia (lateral view); 9b, uncus (posterior view); 9c, valvae (posterior view); 9d, right valva (lateral view); 9e, aedeagus (lateral view); 10a–b: *S. s. sutakiki* (paratype), female genitalia, 10a, genitalia (lateral view); 10b, genitalia (ventral view).

narrowly bordered iridescent blue-green and orange posteriorly; vestigial blue-green and orange markings in space 1b; trace of tornal black spot and iridescent blue-green markings; genitalia (Fig. 9) similar to *Tartesa*: dorsal portion of aedeagus membraneous (a feature apparently otherwise restricted to *Tartesa*); valva distinctive, with two sharp lateral projections. Female forewing length 22 mm; upperside dull grey-brown; forewing upperside with indistinct white postdiscal patch; hindwing upperside with prominent black spot in space 2; underside as male; for genitalia (Fig. 10) see notes under *Solomona* gen. n. (above).

Distribution. Guadalcanal island.

Type material. HOLOTYPE ♂: Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, north of mount Popomanaseu, river Sutakiki, 500 m, 2.viii.1996, W. J. Tennent (gen. prep. BMNH (V) 5148) (BMNH); PARATYPES: 2 ♀♀, same data (inc. gen. prep. BMNH (V) 5149); 2 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀, Guadalcanal, Gold Ridge village, 580 m, 5.viii.1996, W. J. Tennent; 1 ♀ Guadalcanal, south coast, Chocho to Mbabanakira, SL, 6.xi.1997, W. J. Tennent (all BMNH).

Solomona sutakiki malaitae ssp. n. (Figs 3, 4, 7, 8)

Description. Male forewing length 18 mm; resembles *S. s. sutakiki*; upperside paler, veins less heavily lined brown; underside like *S. s. sutakiki*; ground colour almost white, giving more contrasted appearance; genitalia like *S. s. sutakiki*. Female resembles *S. s. sutakiki*: forewing upperside white patch extensive, leaving wide brown margin at costa and outer margin; hindwing upperside paler; prominent black marginal spot in space 2; obscure spot in space 3; underside like male.

Distribution. Malaita island.

Type material. HOLOTYPE ♂, Solomon Islands, Malaita, 3.7 km inland from Auki, xii.1983, AGW [=A G Worsnop] (BMNH); PARATYPES, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, same data (BMNH); 1 ♂, 1 ♀, same data (Dodo Creek Research Station, Honiara).

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